settlements on the east bank and along the lower reaches of the Sobat. Their country is treeless savannah but, unlike their cousins the Nuer and Dinka, they are predominantly agricultural and sedentary, for their long river frontage gives them adequate water and grazing in the dry season for the comparatively few cattle (about 25,000) they possess.[1] The brief account I give of their social structure is mostly derived from articles in *Sudan Notes and Records* by Mr Pumphrey and Mr Howell.[2]

The hamlets (*myer*, sing. *pac*), built from 100 yards to a mile or so apart on high ground parallel to the river, vary in size from one to fifty homesteads; a homestead (*gol*), the residence of a family (*gol*), consisting usually of two huts encircled by a fence. Each hamlet is occupied by members of an extended family, or small lineage, with their wives, and the homesteads of this group are arranged in a rough horseshoe shape around a common cattle-byre, which shelters the animals in the rains and is used as a club at all seasons, and a common kraal. The headman of a hamlet (*jal dwong pac*) who is also the head of a lineage in

[1] I am indebted to Mr John Donald of the Sudan Political Service for the most recent figures of human and bovine population.
[2] M. E. C. Pumphrey, 'The Shilluk Tribe', *S.N. and R.* (1941); P. P. Howell, 'The Shilluk Settlement', *ibid.* (1941).

the settlement of which it forms part represents the hamlet on the council of the settlement and receives in consequence a robe of honour from the king or from the chief of the settlement. If his hamlet is only a subsidiary seat of a lineage in the settlement he is regarded merely as its senior member.

The settlement to which I have just referred is called *podh*, a word which has a number of meanings but generally designates a group of hamlets, occupied by different lineages, which, though there may be much competition between them, unite for defence, for the ritual of age-sets (an institution otherwise of little political importance), and in intersettlement and national affairs, and have a common chief. There are about a hundred of these settlements in Shillukland, each having a population of from less than 100 to more than 600 adult males. They are structurally distinct groups of a political kind though the distance that divides a settlement from adjacent settlements may be no greater than that which separates a hamlet from its nearest neighbours in the same settlement.

In every settlement there is a dominant lineage, the *dyil*, the owners of the soil, with whom the various stranger and immigrant accretions (*wedh*) identify themselves politically and with whom they

621 form a separate social community with its own
613 corporate life. This lineage is generally dominant
609 in numbers as well as in virtue of the prestige
derived from its traditional association with the
[622] settlement site. The chief of the settlement is
chosen from it and by its members, though the
stranger lineages have some say in the election,
which must be confirmed by the king (*reth*) of the
Shilluk. Even when a stranger lineage, sometimes
a branch of the royal clan (*kwareth*), becomes more
numerous in a settlement than its dominant lineage
and dispossesses its members of the chieftainship
they still retain some prestige as owners of the soil.
Unity in a settlement and the authority of its chief
are said to depend on its integration around a
powerful dominant lineage. I must, therefore, say
something here about Shilluk lineages.

613 There has been, and still is, some obscurity about
Shilluk descent groups. There are said to be in
Shillukland about 100 groups designated by the
word *kwa* (descendants) followed by the name of
the ancestor of the group. These are often described
in the literature as exogamous clans but many of
them might perhaps be better spoken of as lineages.
They have a typical lineage structure with its charac-
teristic branching off in response to the formation

of new territorial units. Colonies of the same lineage are found in several settlements, so that in any settlement several different descent groups are represented, one of them, as I have already explained, being always dominant in it and identified with the settlement politically. Although the dispersed lineages of a clan do not intermarry, and sometimes acknowledge their common descent in other ways, a man generally thinks in terms of his localized lineage, reference being usually to the ancestor who founded the lineage in his settlement. It is interesting to note a further common feature of lineage systems: the descendants of a man who has settled with his wife's people trace their descent through the wife to the lineage in whose home they live. This practice is, as among the other Nilotic peoples, one of the ways in which stranger lineages are grafted into the genealogical structure of the dominant lineage in a settlement. However, until we know more than we do at present about the distribution of lineages, about their genealogical structure, and about the part they play in inter-settlement relations it will not be possible to estimate fully their political significance.

All the Shilluk settlements compose a common polity, the kingdom of Shillukland. They are

565 attached themselves to the court—and have been
644 given the fictional collectivity of exogamous line-
[613] ages. They are said to be rather more numerous than the royal clan. During a king's lifetime his special band of retainers used, until the practice was discouraged by the Government, to live near the capital in a hamlet of their own, but when their master was buried in his natal settlement some of them moved there with his elderly widows, and their descendants remained there to tend his shrine. Also, when a prince was 'planted out', as the Shilluk say, in a settlement, his father sent some of his retainers to live there and these became *bang*
565 *nyireth*, a prince's clients. They served the prince
644 during his lifetime, and after his death their de-
613 scendants continued to live near the prince's
621 descendants as a fictitious lineage. Consequently, where there is a branch of the royal clan in a settlement there is usually a lineage of clients in the same settlement. The clients are merged in the general
[101] category of commoners, *colo*, of which word 'Shilluk' is an Arabic corruption, though it is said of them that they have a slightly lower social status than members of other commoner clans because they have no traditional rights in the settlements in which they live.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

631 on page 45. Gar, the northern division, has Golbañ as its capital. Each division has five provinces; those of Lwak from south to
[778] north are Tung or Tonga, Odong or Panyikang (Fenikang, with capital Fenikang, containing the great shrine of Nyakang, perhaps the holiest of all Shilluk shrines), Adod or Dithin, and Padit, while Gar is divided into Dithwok, Dimoth, Non, Dhyang Dwong, and Jangoriang; the two latter are more or less equivalent to the geographical area called Mwom, embracing the most northerly portion of the Shilluk kingdom with its capital Akurwa, the site of one of the most important shrines of Nyakang.

The chiefs of Mwom and Tonga were said to wield most power; the chief of Kwom is naturally somewhat eclipsed by the presence of the king in this district.

361 It is difficult to describe a Shilluk village; in fact, the word is hardly applicable to the Shilluk settlement. In typical Shilluk country on the west bank a series of small hamlets may be seen lying from a quarter to a mile or more back from the river, succeeding each other, as has been well said, like beads on a string. Most of these hamlets are small, consisting of only a few homesteads. Each homestead
592 belongs to one householder and contains some three or four huts
342 surrounded by a fence of millet stalks. One hut is the sleeping apartment of the householder and his wife—if there is more than one wife each woman will have her own hut—one is used for cooking, and others may be assigned to servants, or slaves if any are attached to the family. The householders in each hamlet are members of a single
614 clan, with descent in the male line, and are often closely related by
● 621 blood.

Thus the hamlet is both a social and a local group, and though the usual word for clan is *kwa* (which is also used for "family" or "ancestor", and for "grandfather") our informants at Fenikang often used the territorial prefix *pa* (or *fa*), which literally means "place", for the group that occupied one hamlet. It is clear that members of the same *kwa* are clansmen, whether they dwell in one hamlet or are located at a distance. Another word that seemed to have the same significance was *gol*. Actually, as Mr. Heasty
613 informs us, this is a smaller unit formed within the *kwa*, arising
614 through some influential man starting a settlement of his own, when
621 his descendants (living there) form his *gol* until they become a large and powerful unit, take a new name, and become a *kwa*. Thus the *gol* Nyikako near Doleib Hill takes its name from an influential

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

man of that name; should this *gol* become strong enough, it will take a new name and become *kwa* Kako. This agrees well with Westermann's statement that *gol* means enclosure, home, homestead, family. It is seen in the names of some sections, e.g. Golobogu, corresponding with the *kwa* Obogo of Westermann.

Several hamlets in the midst of their cultivation patches form a *fane*, which might be called a village group, under a chief (*jago*). A number of *fane*, each with its own grazing ground (*wak*), form a *fodo* (district), a number of *fodo* going to form each of the ten provinces of the Shilluk kingdom.

Fenikang, which is relatively large for a Shilluk village, consists of only two clans, the Golobogu and Pameiti, both traditionally attached to the great shrine. As their homesteads are built in two groups round the dancing space by the shrine, Fenikang corresponds more to our idea of a village than do most of the groups of isolated Shilluk hamlets, while Fashoda, with perhaps forty to fifty homesteads, has a special organization since it is inhabited only by royal wives and a few herdsmen. As a rule the number of homesteads in any Shilluk village is not great; there are, however, some large "villages". Atwadoi, north of Kodok, is, or was, the largest, and in 1903 was said to contain 120 homesteads.

As regards the clans themselves, Westermann gives a formidable list[1]; actually many of these are not clans; he mistakenly raises a number of princely families to clan rank (e.g. *kwa* Nyadwai, the descendants of King Nyadwai) and he also includes a *kwa* Nikai, which, as Hofmayr points out,[2] stands for *kwa* Nyakai, i.e. the family of Nyakai, the crocodile mother of Nyakang (pp. 85–6) who is "related" to every member of the royal family. Whether families founded by foreigners have attained true clan rank, e.g. *kwa* Okogi, we cannot say, but it may well be so.

There are numerous observances connected with animals, including some which might be called taboos, but we did not ourselves discover any definite evidence of totemism, though as already stated clan exogamy prevails. On the other hand both Westermann and Hofmayr consider that totemism exists. Westermann gives the following example:—

> "The ostrich and the crow and Deng were split out of the gourd, all three are three-twin children. Deng went into a certain village, the ostrich went into the bush, and the crow flew up. We were born by Deng. Akwoe (the

[1] Op. cit., 127–34. [2] Op. cit., 237, where Westermann's list is criticised.

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

ichneumon (mangeuste). The natives also hunt the hare, porcupine, ground-squirrel, rat, and hedgehog. The rivers and khors, and chiefly their sidearms, are populated by crocodiles, hippos, and numerous fish, some of which weigh up to lbs. 200. The birds are mainly riverain: cranes, storks, herons, egrets, fish-eagles, marabous, pelicans, ibises, ducks, geese; the guinea-fowl is very common; numberless swarms of dura-birds (Pyromelana franciscana) are a great nuisance to the farmer; besides them quails, pigeons, turtle-doves, hawks, crows, swallows, owls, and starlings are frequent. Of snakes the largest ist python; of poisonous species the puff-adder and some others occur; harmless snakes are numerous.

POPULATION

The population amounts to about 60000 souls,[1] who live in a little more than 1200 villages, and 10000 "domiciles", each of which consists of three to five huts. Accordingly the average number of people living in a village is 50, and one domicile is inhabited by about six persons. The largest village is Atwadoi in a district of the same name north of Kodok; it consists (1903) of 120 domiciles. The villages generally lie in the belt between the swamp of the Nile-bank and the forest. There are, however, eight groups of villages 12—22 miles inland, away from the river. The country is, for its size, and considering the fact that only in the higher parts settlements are possible, thickly populated. "Right away from Kaka to Lake No is a continous string of villages lying about a mile from the river. There are only two points in the whole of this distance, at which the interval between villages exceeds two miles, and these are the points where grazing is bad, between Akurwar and Nun, and between Nielwag and Nyagwado." A. E. S., p. 193.

According to Schweinfurth, the population was much larger formerly. In 1871, when the Egyptians had conquered the country, a census was taken; the villages on the left bank of the Nile were almost exactly 3000. The inhabitants of this part numbered one million, each village consisting of 45—200 huts, a hut comprising four persons. No part of Africa, not even of the world, is so densely populated. "The whole western Nile bank, as far as the boundaries of the country reach, is like one single village, whose parts are separated by a distance of only 500 to 1000 steps. The hut-clusters are built in an astonishing regularity, and are so crowded together that from a distance they look like a cluster of mushrooms."

The statement of a population of more than one million is probably too high; the Shilluks have doubtlessly suffered cruelly from wars and raids, but in spite of this a decrease from one million to 60000 within a time of forty years is hardly thinkable.

Since the time the people live under the peace of Anglo-Egyptian rule, they

[1] This is the number of the White Nile and Sobat Shilluks only; if all the Shilluk speaking people are included, the population will amount to several hundreds of thousands.

592 there may be a dependent relative or friend. A man's sons live in his homestead until they get married; if their father is dead, they live in the *gol* of their eldest brother or in that of their father's married [678] brother. The owner of the homestead is the head of the *gol*; he holds the cattle belonging to the unit and is responsible for the behaviour of the members of his *gol*. He has to pay cattle in compensation for any wrong which may be committed by any of the members.

The Hamlet (pac)

36 Hamlets are built about 100 yards apart on high ground parallel to the river. They vary considerably in size according to the number of homesteads which compose them. The homesteads of a hamlet are grouped round a cattle kraal containing a hut which shelters all the herds in the rainy season. The byre and hut are used as the general meeting-places and social centres for the inhabitants at all times and guests are entertained [882] there. There is often a *geu*, a hut with no surrounding fence, which is used as a dormitory by the unmarried men. The hamlet is a homogeneous ● 62 unit being an extended family group or a small lineage.
[613]

The Settlement (poth)

The settlement consists of a number of hamlets, occupied by different [36] lineages. There are several hundred settlements, often not socially distinct from one another. There is, however, a structural division which is recognised by the people themselves in referring to the settlement units. In spite of lineage differentiations within each settlement, all unite to defend the whole, all take part in the ritual of the age-set organisation, all participate in the settlement's relations with other settlements and all acknowledge a common chief.

554 The lineage organisation within a settlement revolves round two recog-
613 nised types of lineages: the *dyil* and the *weth*. It is said that Nyikang,
62 the Shilluk culture hero and founder of the present Shilluk tribe, origin-
[773] ally granted each settlement to a clan. The surviving descendants of the grantees are considered the 'owners of the soil' and are termed *dyil* to distinguish them from lineages which settled on their land later and which are called *weth*. If the original owners of the land are extinct, the *weth* lineage next in importance takes their place and becomes *dyil*. The members of the *dyil* lineage are closely associated with the land they occupy and are accorded considerable prestige and authority in virtue of their position and this association. The *dyil* form the core of the settlement and political activities revolve round them. The *weth* lineage members are not socially inferior, but the *dyil* lineages have greater prestige and are expected to be the leaders in important matters in the settlement. For this reason the *dyil* of a settlement is the 'dominant lineage'.

[629] The chief of the settlement, the *jago*, is taken from the *dyil* lineage. In practice, it occasionally happens that the dominant position of the *dyil* lineage is taken over by a stronger, wealthier, and more numerous lineage but, even if dispossessed of political power and the chieftainship, the original *dyil* lineage retains its ritual connection with the soil and also much of its local prestige. This ritual relationship remains so long as any living representatives of the original *dyil* lineage remain.

The Shilluk settlement is open, on the other hand, to certain structural weaknesses which follow from its internal organisation. These are pointed out by Pumphrey.(1) Each *wedh* kinship group has a dual loyalty - to its own lineage and to the settlement as represented by the *jago* and the dominant lineage. Only if the settlement chief and his lineage are strong are the loyalties of the hamlet lineages submerged in the larger unit. The cohesion of the settlement is, however, favoured in the rainy season owing to the fact that travelling is difficult and the community tends to be isolated. At such times the influence of the Shilluk *reth* is diminished and he has to rely on the loyalty of the settlement chief; isolation also increases the feeling of unity and the Shilluk clans, being dispersed and without territorial cohesion, are placed at a disadvantage.

Each lineage represented within a settlement has its original hamlet, the *pan dwong*, founded by the original immigrant who started the lineage in the settlement, and this is at the head of all hamlets of the lineage which have subsequently been formed in the settlement. The lineage head is the chief of the *pan dwong* and represents his lineage in the administration of the settlement unit. New hamlets are continually being founded by ambitious young men - usually in the same settlement as the parent hamlet and subservient to it, but occasionally they are started in another part of the country. The offshoots from the original hamlet (*pan dwong*) in the same settlement are called *nyole myer* and are included under the name of the original hamlet, but if some grow important and large they will acquire separate names. Some originally powerful hamlets may eventually disintegrate altogether.

The lineages, and therefore the hamlets within a settlement, are closely related through kinship ties of one sort and another. A common feature in many lineage systems, and one which is also found among the Shilluk, is that the descendants of a man who has settled with his wife's people trace their descent through the female link to the lineage in whose home they live. Howell quotes specific instances in which this occurred in a settlement.(2)

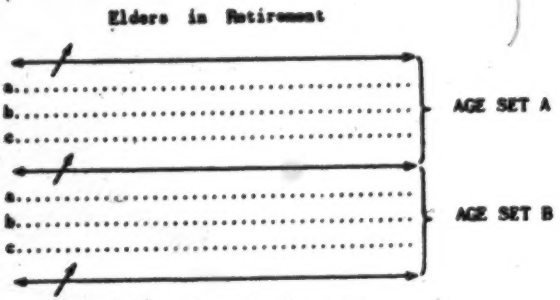
The *wedh* lineages are thus grafted on to the dominant lineages of a settlement. Intermarriage occurs between members and relationship is traced through female links, the *wedh* lineage becoming 'sister's sons', and thus the structural differentiation within a settlement is greatly mitigated. The settlement is an integrated unit bound together by territorial unity, common economic and legal interests, allegiance to one chief and to a dominant lineage to which all are connected in some way, and finally, bound by the necessity of mutual co-operation during the rainy season and in times of danger from outside sources. To counterbalance this, there are lineage loyalties and lines of structural cleavage within the settlement. These, in certain circumstances, such as weak leadership and dissatisfaction with their representation by the chief to the central authority, may cause the settlement unit to be rent by internal feuds and fissions.

Divisions

There are 11 divisions as follows:-(3)

(1) Pumphrey, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.7. (2) Howell, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.55.
(3) Howell and Thompson, *S.N.R.* 1946, Vol.XXVII, Fig.2.

thus occurs periodically. The subdivisions of any age set are known as 561
'head', 'neck' and 'middle'.



..... Subdivisions in formation.

As new subdivisions are continually being formed by initiated youths the immediate age set into which they enter grows too large. In addition the oldest subdivisions of the age set, comprising the married men and fathers, begin to die out or are ready for retirement. A new grouping of all the subdivisions is achieved by the *ngol* or cutting ceremony, when age sets are ceremonially divided into distinct units. The process is shown in the diagram. Surviving members of age set A (the older subdivisions) pass completely out of the age organisation into retirement. Older subdivisions of age set B pass into age set A to replace those retiring, while the most recently formed subdivisions pass for the first time into age set B. Thus, room is made for the formation of new subdivisions and there is a moving of subdivisions through the age sets or the formation of newly constituted age sets.

The retired age sets take no part in fighting or in ceremonies connected with the age-set organisation. The reshuffling occurs at the induction of the very young subdivisions, the members of which are anxious to have further privileges and a higher status. On ceremonial occasions the age sets have special parts of the animals killed, the highest age set eats the back and chest, the lower will eat the hump and legs only. According to Howell the regrouping of subdivisions is often the subject of much dispute, particularly between the two subdivisions which will be separated by the new line of division.

There are few occasions when the age set functions. At funerals the men are organised according to age sets as also at beer feasts when each sits in a special place and sings its own song. [764 574]

Age sets emphasise the solidarity of the settlement by organising the generations within it. Each settlement unit has its own age-set organisation and there is no connection between the age sets of different settlements, though they all have similar forms and play similar parts in the settlement units. The age sets have little political importance, save that they constitute a bond of unity within the settlement, and this is clear 182 561 621

182 561 621 from the fact that the *jago*, elders of the *dyil* clan, and other lineage representatives, hold political authority quite apart from the age organisation. The age sets take no part in disputes within the settlement, but when the settlement as a whole goes to war the warriors "... are mobilised into age sets."(1) Howell suggests that formerly the age organisation had special military functions, but whether this was so or not, the age sets seem to fulfil a more peaceful purpose today, and form a useful basis for organising the relations of generations for social purposes.

The Ngol Ceremony

561 624 At the *ngol* ceremony a war leader *(bun)* is elected. The *bun* has no administrative or political functions. His duties consist in organising the mobilisation of the warriors and presiding at communal feasts at which people assemble in age sets. His age mates may assist him in his cultivations. After the *ngol* ceremony each age set is given a new name.

Initiation

561 881 There are no elaborate rites of initiation among the Shilluk. Participation in a dance, the *cong bul* marks the initiation of a youth in the age organisation. The *cong bul* is a social affair which is arranged periodically with the permission of the *jago* of the settlement. It is not a ceremony of initiation in the normal sense but merely a formal recognition by the community that a lad has reached adult status and can take part in a man's obligations and privileges. Previous to the *cong bul* a youth is restricted in that he may not fight with spears, take part in war or in any dance other than one held for children. Before the *cong bul* he is not allowed to wear certain kinds of ornaments.

The *cong bul* is attended by a boy when he is 14-16 years old, or earlier if he has to take over the duties of family head through the death of his father. A youth normally obtains his father's permission and another man is appointed to act as his sponsor. The sponsor ceremonially adorns the youth with ornaments before he enters the dance. At the beginning of the dance the warriors salute the *jago*, advance in formation and fling themselves before him.

[553 556] At the time of the *cong bul* the initiated is usually presented with two spears by his father. Rich men give their sons an ox and they take their ox-names from these animals. An ox so given is kept until it dies and then a new one of the same colour is substituted. After the *cong bul* the initiates visit relatives and travel round the countryside for a few months.

CLANS AND LINEAGES

614 There are about a hundred patrilineal clans in Shillukland. Each clan has a name which is preceded by the word *kwar*, meaning 'descendants of'. All clansmen trace their descent from a common ancestor. They are bound by distinct rules of behaviour, by special observances and are exogamous.(2)

613 614 The Shilluk clans, like all Nilotic clans, are dispersed, each clan

(1) Howell, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.57. (2) *Ibid.*, p.47.

having a great number of local branches, or lineages, spread throughout Shillukland, and there are no periodic reunions.

Members of a lineage are bound not only by kinship ties but also by ties arising through occupation of the same territory. The lineage is an effective political and social unit. A person generally thinks in terms of his localised lineage and refers most often to the founder of his lineage in the district occupied. In relation to members of lineages of other clans, however, reference is most likely to be made to the founding ancestor of a person's clan. As previously mentioned, the occupants of a settlement belong to a collection of independent lineages which graft themselves onto the genealogical structure of the dominant lineage through marriage with its female members.

INHERITANCE

Only the smallest lineage unit is of any importance in the inheritance of property. Pumphrey states that there are no definite rules for the inheritance of chattels.(1) If distribution has not been made before death they are usually taken by the eldest son, or by the next of kin where there are no sons. Cattle are taken by the succeeding *gol* leader, either a married son or a married brother. He cannot do exactly as he likes with them for he inherits certain traditional obligations. He has the moral obligation to use his herds for providing bridewealth to enable the male members of the *gol* to marry, in order of seniority, and it is considered wrong for a *gol* leader to marry a second time himself while there are men of his *gol* still unmarried and requiring cattle. The *gol* leader is also responsible for paying compensation in cattle for any wrong which has been committed by one of his household. Finally, it is recognised that no cattle of the family herds should be sold except in times of famine and to purchase grain. Pumphrey states that a breach of these terms of trust would "be universally censured but would probably not be interfered with by the courts."(2)

Uncultivated land belongs to anyone who settles on it.

MARRIAGE

The Shilluk are polygynous; a wealthy and influential man has three or four wives, while members of the *kwareth* may have several more. Marriage is forbidden with any member of one's father's clan and between all persons in respect of whom relationship, either through the father or mother, could be traced directly. Apart from these obstacles it appears that freedom of choice is generally allowed to both sexes in matrimonial matters.

Bridewealth

Bridewealth consists of ten head of cattle and sheep and spears. In addition the suitor makes small gifts and performs services to win the favour of his future father- and mother-in-law. Bridewealth discussions and arguments proceed between representatives appointed by the suitor's *gol* and by the girl's gol.

(1) Pumphrey, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.24.
(2) *Ibid.*, p.23.

5:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

existence. The smallest unit of Shilluk social structure is the family (*gol*) living in a homestead of one or two huts. From one to fifty or more such homesteads built together form a hamlet, the members of which keep their cattle together, and are gathered round a headman; a group of hamlets forms a settlement, of which there are about a hundred in Shilluk-land. The settlement is composed of branches of different descent groups, one of which is dominant within the settlement and forms a nucleus around which the others form themselves into a distinct community. This dominant descent group or lineage provides the leader or chief of the settlement. Settlements are politically opposed to each other, though there have been in the past loose confederations of settlements, which have been used, and sharpened in outline, for administrative purposes. The whole of Shilluk land is divided into two provinces, Ger in the north and Luak in the south. All the Shilluk recognize a common head of their whole land, the *reth*, who is here called the king; the king always comes from the royal clan, the *kwareth*, founded by the first Shilluk king, Nyikang; it is the largest clan in Shilluk land, and may have representatives in any settlement. There is now a royal capital at Fashoda. In Shilluk tradition the earliest Shilluk kings had no fixed capital, but reigned from their natal homes. Now, although the capital at Fashoda has been long established, the wives of the king are sent away from Fashoda to various parts of Shilluk land to bear their children, and the children of the king (*nyireth*) are brought up away from the capital. Only those princes whose fathers have been installed as kings of the Shilluk can themselves claim to be installed and, in theory at least, princes who are thus eligible may at any time advance their claims by killing the reigning king. Besides the royal clan, and the lineages of 'commoner' clans, known collectively as the *colo*, there is a distinct clan called *ororo*, originally a branch of the royal house, but said to have been disinherited and cut off by an early Shilluk king. Members of this clan have special duties to perform in connexion with the king, but do not have royal status. In addition, there are the *bang reth*, servants of the king, composed of wives of previous kings, descendants of personal attendants of the king, people possessed by the spirit of Nyikang or of some other king, and others who in one way or another have become retainers dependent on the royal house. From these come the guardians and priests of the shrines of Nyikang, of which there are several in various parts of Shilluk country, and the shrines and graves of other Shilluk kings. Offerings are made at these graves and shrines as part of the religious cult of Nyikang and the royal house, which is the main cult of the Shilluk, though offerings are made to their own ancestors also by the heads of the commoner lineages. Their totemic observances seem to amount to little more than not eating the totemic species, and both totemism and the cult of ancestors of commoner descent groups are said to figure less largely in Shilluk religion than the cult of Nyikang and the kings. Shilluk totemism may in fact be of Dinka origin. Besides the priests of the Nyikang cult, and operating apart from them,

Other body marks are also made at will and have no religious significance. The people say that it is nice to have these marks on the body, especially for young men and women and for dancing festivals. These marks take many forms - scorpion, tiger, geometrical designs, or even military signs, especially that of a sergeant on the upper arm.

Clothes.

Hofmayer states that "... So gross die Aufmerksamkeit und Vorliebe für Putz und Schmuck, so gering die Sorge für die Kleider."(18) He also writes: " Während der Mann im Shilluklande fast immer ohne Kleidung ging, stand es mit dem Weibe in dieser Hinsicht anders." (19) and " Langsam beginnen nun auch unter diesem Volke, seitdem christliche Kultur und Religion ins Land gezogen ist, Anzeichen einer besseren Zeit sich einzustellen. Bereits kann man die Nacktheit der Shilluk von diesem Stande als verschwunden betrachten." (20). During my sojourn among the Shilluk I noticed one great difference among the Shilluk and the other Nilotic tribes , this being that the Shilluk were always dressed -at towns as well as in their own villages, children being the only exception - and others were not. Their dress is called in their own tongue LAUO, and consists of a piece of cloth of any colour, but mainly white. The LAUO is placed round the body, so that it reaches down to the knees and is knotted in a special way on the left shoulder by men (21) and the right shoulder by women. Women also wear some other underclothing which is well described by Hofmeyer.(22) But the question is that theLAUO is a standard Shilluk dress; it is neither European nor Arabic from the northern Sudan. It standsunique and the Nuer or the Dinka, who are supposed to have some kinship with the Shilluk, go, men and women , quite naked. Hofmayer's statement, as quoted above, was written in 1923. It is quite impossible that the Shilluk have altered one of the most important habits over a period of 30 or 50 years, taking into account the extremely conservative spirit which all authors attribute to the Shilluk and other Nilotes. Secondly, if the Shilluk men began to dress due to the introduction of Christian culture and religion, they would have adopted the European dress, (23) rather than invent a new type of dress foreign to both missionaries and themselves. Or, if this were due to Christian culture, why did it not produce the same effect among the Dinka and Nuer, among whom comparatively more missionary work has been done than among the Shilluk ? Hofmayer contradicts himself in the same book. Cal, the second Shilluk king, who lived about 1580 A.D., before he died, washed himself, and " Nach vollendeter Waschung kleidete Cal sich an.." (24). This means that the Shilluk used to dress themselves from the beginning of their known history.

I have also no knowledge of a society in which the differences between the two sexes go, or went, as far as that which we could understand from Hofmayer's description, i.e. men go naked while women have a complicated dress system composed of two pieces for the unmarried and of three pieces for the married.

There is also a traditional ceremony of importance in the Shilluk political organisation. Every new chief of a settlement, which is a combined group of lineage hamlets, has to be confirmed in his post by the king. This takes the form of investing the new chief with a LAUO with the king "personally knotting this robe over the jagole (chief) shoulder" (25). In a similar manner, the chief of a hamlet (a lineage group, homesteads in a settlement) may be invested with a LAUO "directly from the king, or from the settlement) may be

[18] "such great attention and predilection for dress and ornamentation, so little care for the children"

[19] " while the men in Shilluk country almost always went without clothing, the women behaved differently in this respect."

[20] slowly in the beginning, but since that time Christian culture and religion has also penetrated among these people, A sign that a better time is coming. Already one can see that the nakedness of the Shilluk is disappearing from this country."

291 invested with a LAUO, " directly from the King, or from the settlement chief."
621 (26) This ceremony shows clearly that the LAUO plays a symbolic role in the
643 Shilluk political institutions. (27) Those institutions are more or less matters of tradition , and traditions are rarely changed in a conservative society.

291 I have dwelt at length upon this problem, not only to criticize Hofmayer, but mainly to direct attention to one of the most important cultural characteristics of the Shilluk, in comparison with other Nilotic groups, and to show that this is not a newly acquired custom, but has deep roots in the past that can be explained by cultural contact or diffusion that affected only the Shilluk.

Notes.

113 (1) Seligman, C.G. & B. Z.; Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan. London 1932 P.40
(2) Hofmeyer, W., Die Shilluk, Wien 1925. p 247.
[63] (3) The word means the "meeting-place of the people".
(4) Tothill, J.D., Agriculture in the Sudan, London 1948. p.815
(5) Ibid, pp. 820/821
(6) Ibid, p. 812
(7) Seligman, B. Notes and Queries in Anthropology, London.
(8) " C.G., Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan, London 1932, p 13
(9) Hofmeyer W., Die Shilluk. Wien 1925. p 19
(10) Seligman , C.G., Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, No 11 London 1910, pp. 516/517
The figures in brackets indicate the number of persons measured.
(11) Seligmann, C.G., Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan. London 1932, p. 418
(12) see above, Table "C" No A 4, and A 1, have three lines.
(13) Butt A., 1952, p 28
(14) see above, table "C"
(15) see above , table "C", card No B 3, he was the son of king Yor, who adopted the name of Omar, and converted to Islam.
(16) Seligman C.G., Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan. London 1932, p 49
(17) Butt, A., 1952, p 28
(18) Hofmeyer, W., Die Shilluk, Wien 1925. p 344
(19) Ibid, p. 345
(20) Ibid, p. 345
[114] (21) This may be explained by the wish to let the right arm always free to throw spears or anything else. Also Seligman (1932, p 43) erred when he said that " the inhabitants of a village, Pathour, mark a scorpion several inches in length... on the shoulder - left for men and right for women- so that it is not hidden by the shoulder cloth."
(22) Hofmeyer, W., 1925, p 345/346
[117] (23) This is the case I have observed; the Shilluk who comes under the influence
997] of missions or who was converted to Christianity uses European shorts and shirts, and the Shilluk who was converted to Islam wears the usual Arab white dress, with a turban.
(24) Hofmeyer, W., 1925. p 39
(25) Butt, A., The Nilotes of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and Uganda, London 1925. p. 30
(26) Ibid, p 30
[171] (27) There is a similar ceremony among the Fung of investing the new chiefs with a head dress.

8:Howell E-4,5 (1937, 1948) 1953 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

in the courts are of a kind which in the past were mere matters of convention and usage and could not be defined as law even in the most extended definition of that term. The tendency is for the most intimate personal relationships to be governed by legal processes. This is a feature of the Nilotic world under the influence of modern administration which, while present among the Shilluk, is even more marked among Nuer and Dinka. There is a danger in this, because intervention in almost every sphere of human activity may tend to inhibit the normal readjustments which might otherwise naturally emerge to meet changing conditions. It is therefore all the more necessary to record something of present practice for comparison in later years.

The vast majority of cases which appear before the courts concern kinship obligations, marital relationships and the violation of rights in women. This article is therefore largely a description of the normal processes of marriage: the payment and distribution of bridewealth, divorce, and the infringement of legal rights in women. It is also in the nature of a commentary on previous articles published by Mr. M. E. C. Pumphrey and myself[1] on the subject of kinship and social organization among the Shilluk. From time to time reference is made to Nuer and Dinka institutions by way of comparison.[2] A few examples of actual disputes as heard and recorded in the Shilluk Courts are given in the text.

Shilluk Social Structure

Shilluk society is divided into 'provinces', 'divisions' (*lak*), and 'settlements' (*padh*). These are territorial and political segments, but it is really only the settlement which has any permanent political significance. Each settlement has a common territory, the boundaries of which run at approximately right angles to the river. Such territory includes a section of the highland ridge which runs roughly parallel to the Nile and on which the permanent dwelling-houses and cattle-byres are built; a section of the river front (*toic*) which provides green grazing for the cattle when the river drops, and finally a more extensive section of the hinterland (*wak*) which is subjected to varying degrees of rain-flooding during the wet season but is dry and waterless for the rest of the year. Each type of land is essential for pastoral and agricultural activities according to the season, and the territorial segmentation of Shilluk country could not be arranged otherwise.

A settlement is an economic, political, and social unit, but is not a kinship unit since it contains representative lineages of several of the many Shilluk clans. Within the settlement there is, however, a tendency—not always effective for purely topographical reasons—for each lineage to occupy its own 'village'. Each village (*pac*) is made up of a number of 'hamlets' (also *pac*: pl. *myer*) which comprise several domestic units (*gol*), each such unit consisting of a group of dwelling-huts (*ot*) occupied by a man, his wives, and children. The village is therefore also a kinship unit and, as a general rule, the closer the territorial proximity, the closer the kinship relationship. Clans (described by giving the name of the founder with the suffix *kwa*, meaning 'descendants of') are patrilineal descent groups which are theoretically exogamous, though separation in space, coupled with considerable distance of relationship within the kinship structure, may allow modifications of this rule. The

[1] *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. xxiv, 1941.

[2] The reader may consult the works of Professor Evans-Pritchard on the Nuer. The Dinka are less well documented.

8:Howell E-4,5 (1937, 1948) 1953 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

localized lineage within one settlement is certainly exogamous and there is also a bar to marriage into the maternal lineage. The clan, widely distributed in minor branches throughout Shilluk country, does not function as a corporate unit except at times of national festivals and then only in the sphere of ceremonial and ritual.

Marriage and Marriage Laws

As with the Nuer and Dinka, marriage among the Shilluk is achieved by the performance of recognized social procedures and the payment of bridewealth in the form of cattle, sheep, and goats. Nowadays, cash may be paid in addition to or in lieu of cattle, but not frequently and not in large sums.[1] It must be emphasized from the start that the Shilluk do not possess anything like the number of cattle owned by the Nuer and Dinka,[2] and for this reason alone the number of beasts paid as bridewealth is lower. Among the Nuer and Dinka the average ranges from fifteen to forty head of cattle according to the prevailing condition of the herds. Among the Shilluk the number is fixed at ten head, and although there have been times when few Shilluk were able to pay this number, it has been retained rigidly for several generations despite attempts by the Administration to reduce it. With sheep and goats, which are paid in addition but do not have the same significance, there is no such rigidity. The number of these seems to vary according to the attractions of the bride, though prevailing economic conditions doubtless play their part.

There is much to be found on the subject of marriage in the writings of Hofmayr, Westermann, and Seligman,[3] though many statements are misleading. This summary account of Shilluk marriage laws is based largely on the writings, both published and unpublished, of M. E. C. Pumphrey[4] who not only took into account previous literature but, as an administrator in Shilluk country for several years, had better opportunities to investigate the legal aspect of the subject. These are supplemented by my own direct observations.[5]

The Social Processes and Legality of Marriage

Pumphrey says:

> The marriage tie creates an obligation to pay cattle, but it is not created by or dependent upon such payment. To render a union a marriage only two things are essential. First there must be no positive barrier (such as known consanguinity between the parties . . .) and secondly there must be an offer and an acceptance. The offer and acceptance are symbolised by the man offering the woman's *gol*[6] a sheep (*dyel dhok*). Acceptance of this sheep signifies acceptance of the suitor. The marriage is then complete.[7]

This transaction, which is limited to the immediate family of the parties to the marriage, is followed by *tieng mogho* (the brewing of beer) and a wedding dance (*mogho thiek*) to which many persons are invited and which therefore serves to make the union widely known. It is not, however, strictly correct to say that the marriage is,

[1] The tendency to use cash in lieu of cattle is apparently increasing.

[2] Ratio of human to cattle population: Shilluk 1:0·25; Nuer 1:2·5 (highest recorded).

[3] See Bibliography of the Shilluk, given in a previous article (*Africa*, xxii. 2).

[4] Pumphrey, 'The Shilluk Tribe', *S.N.R.*, vol. xxiv, 1941.

[5] Based on field work carried out in 1937 and on an investigation and analysis of the marriages of one Shilluk lineage carried out in 1948. The results are to be published later.

[6] Family group and legal guardians.

[7] Pumphrey, op. cit., p. 25.

9:Howell E-5 (1937-1950) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

that the most definite contrasts may be found. Whether this established and institutionalized monarchy is the result of diffusion from elsewhere, a legacy from ancient Egypt,[1] or the result of spontaneous development from the politico-religious functionaries who exist in embryo form among other Shilluk-speaking[2] and, indeed, other Nilotic peoples, is a controversial subject which I do not propose to discuss here.

Territorially, Shilluk country is divided into two provinces, within which are the northern and southern provinces of Muomo and Tung, eleven divisions, and finally each division into a number of settlements which are referred to as *padh*.[3] The settlement is the largest political unit which has a permanent and stable function in Shilluk society today.[4] The members occupy a common and clearly defined territory, have a common grazing and fishing area held collectively, a common name, and a common system of age-set nomenclature.[5] Within each settlement are a number of villages or hamlets, each of which, with its offshoots, is occupied by a distinct kinship group, the local lineage of one of the main Shilluk clans. One of these lineages is usually dominant and, though it does not give its name to the settlement, its leader is generally recognized as holding some authority over the rest of the community. In each settlement there are also usually representative lineages of *kwareth* who sometimes, but not always, have assumed a position of dominance within that settlement, usually by force of numbers. There are also *bang reth* living in close association with *kwareth* or tending one or more of the numerous royal shrines.[6]

There are frequent movements and migrations, both of individuals and of small domestic groups. The persons who thus take up residence in other parts of the country retain links with kinsmen in their original home and these links continue for a period. The number of generations which pass before they are forgotten is indeterminate and variable, but the factor of territorial association is an important one. Lineages of one clan living in one area are likely to retain these links and remain bound by rules of exogamy however far removed they may be in the kinship structure. Moreover, common residence in one village area or even one settlement may create bonds which are equal in strength to kinship ties and may even carry with it a bar to intermarriage. In such circumstances there is usually the fiction of common descent through the female line. Among the Shilluk there is a bar to marriage with close relatives on the maternal side carried to three or four generations, but common residence sometimes creates a more permanent prohibition.

[1] See Seligman, C. G., *Egypt and Negro Africa*. George Routledge & Sons, 1934, p. 60.

[2] For example, the Anuak nobles; see Evans-Pritchard, *The Political System of the Anuak of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*, Monographs on Social Anthropology, London School of Economics, 1940; and Driberg, J. H., *The Lango*.

[3] *padh*. A more elastic and relative term than I had realised when writing an article on this subject in 1937. *padh* simply means 'home' or 'homeland' and Shilluk refer to *padh collo*: 'Shillukland'. The word itself has the same relativity as the Nuer word *ciang* and the Dinka word *wut*.

[4] There have, of course, been changes of boundaries and processes of fission and fusion characteristic of any segmentary society. The nature of the terrain in Shilluk country, however, precludes any great change. The limitations of high ground, with clear-cut watercourses as boundaries, together with associated economic interests, tend to stabilize communities.

[5] This is a significant fact and one which throws much light on the true nature of the Shilluk *padh*. When we compare other Nilotic tribes we find that age-set nomenclature is common to whole tribes, but does not extend beyond tribal boundaries (Nuer) or, like the Shilluk, is limited to smaller segments of society (Ngork Dinka).

[6] Lineages of the *kwareth* are referred to by the name of the *reth*, *nyireth* (son of a *reth*), or *nyinyireth* (grandson of a *reth*) who founded them. Thus *kwareth* Fadiet, *kwanyireth* Adung, &c. Similarly, *bang reth* are distinguished as *bang reth* Fadiet, *bang nyireth* Adung, &c.

8:Howell E-4,5 (1937, 1948) 1953 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

same woman and to do so would result in spiritual calamity and actual sickness (*dwalo*) for which ritual expiation would be necessary, even though an indemnity would not be claimed. This spiritual bar does not apply to half-brothers though again no compensation would be expected. Immunity from the payment of compensation for adultery extends also to paternal cousins and agnatic kinsmen farther removed in the kinship structure. The extent is variable—a link four to five generations back may still give immunity—but it appears that common residence in one hamlet or one settlement is a factor of importance. Shilluk say that this theoretical relaxation of the law of adultery is less commonly accepted than in the past and that compensation is more frequently demanded. This may be due to the fact that legal machinery is now available for the settlement of such claims, though presumably public opinion in the matter is expressed in the judgements of the Courts. Moreover, the network of obligations to assist relatives in the payment of compensation of this sort was cast wider in the past. Hence, theoretically at any rate, those who would receive compensation might well be those upon whom lies the obligation to assist in its payment. The two obligations thus cancel each other out.

The following court case illustrates the procedure.

Ajak *wad* Fadiet *v.* Awow *wad* Awingjok (*kwor kwob nian ajur*)

Awow seduced Landeng, daughter of Akiec *wad* Nyaljok. Landeng was at the time betrothed to Ajak, who had paid nine head of cattle and thirty-six sheep. She had not, however, taken up residence with Ajak at the time of the offence and, since no child resulted, only one bull is claimable. The Court awarded Ajak one bull which will be handed over to Landeng's brother, since Ajak himself has no legal claim to it.

Akoc *wad* Agiu *v.* Taytung *wad* Deng (*kwor yac nian ajur*)

Taytung impregnated Nyandongkal (daughter of Bilnyang, brother of Agiu) and she produced a girl-child. She was subsequently married to Ajing Amikwei for a full bridewealth of ten head of cattle. The baby, however, remains with her maternal uncle and is *okeijo*. Her maternal uncle has full rights in the child and will receive the bridewealth on her marriage. Neither her mother's husband nor her physical father have any rights in her at all. This case was brought before the Court merely because Taytung had not completed the compensation payment which he was ordered to do. (He had, in fact, only paid two out of the three.)

Onak *wad* Maydong *v.* Dogeng *wad* Ajwin (*kwor yac cie dhano*)

Dogeng seduced Onak's sister Agwer. She was at the time betrothed to one Bul Ayuil, but was living at home. A boy was born to Agwer after she had taken up residence with Bul, by then her legal husband. For this reason, the child (though actually dead) is considered to belong to Bul, though the compensation is claimed by Onak. The case was brought to the Court simply because Dogeng had paid no compensation which he had previously been ordered to pay by instalments. No dispute over legal paternity of the child or over the compensation cattle had arisen. Had the child lived (especially if it had been a girl-child) Onak might have claimed legal rights in it, though the ruling here, as we have seen, is that providing the child was actually born after the woman had taken up residence with her husband it should belong to him. In fact, the child was born a considerable time after Agwer had taken up residence with Bul. Otherwise the case might have been classed as *kwor yac nian ajur* and assessed at only three head of cattle.

9:Howell E-5 (1937-1950) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

tion, from which he may have deducted recognized fees for his services in the same way as the Nuer and Dinka functionaries did, or did he appropriate the cattle to himself as head of the State? Was homicide a crime against society of which the *reth* was the central representative, or was it merely a private delict? These questions are relevant and fundamental to the whole problem of the nature of Shilluk law and the position of the monarchy.

As among other Nilotic people, we are faced with the difficulty of finding out how homicide was composed before the advent of the present Government. Among the Shilluk it would really be necessary to have information dating back to a period before the advent of the Turkish régime in 1867. It is doubtful, of course, whether the Turks ever had sufficient control over the Shilluk to have any direct influence on their laws and legal procedures, but since they attempted to administer the country through the agency of the *reth*, at any rate during some periods of their administration, they doubtless influenced him in this particular connexion. Except for vague references to the existence of homicide, to internecine strife, and the warlike character of the Shilluk, I know of no precise mention of this subject in early literature.

Blood-feuds and inter-settlement fighting

Shilluk settlements have certain distinctive characteristics including the restriction of age-set names and the ritual of the age-grade system within the settlement. Although now fast disappearing, and no longer of great significance owing to the repressive policy of the Government, the primary function of the age-grade organization seems to have been military.[1] Hofmayr on this subject says:

> Every man is a soldier and literally always under 'arms'. Every Shilluk who has ceremonially danced, is a warrior as long as he is able to bear arms. They form groups. Every settlement is independent with its own *bany* (principal singer and president). Different settlements combine and sally forth under the leadership of the eldest *bany* against their powerful enemies.[2]

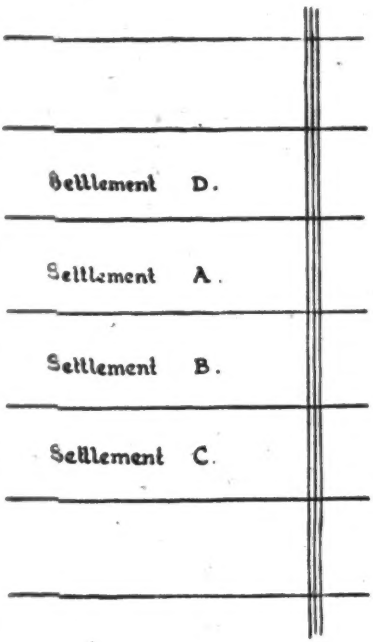
The *bany* or *bong*[3] is, within the settlement, the leader of organized hostilities, which have been frequent between Shilluk settlements. His function in this connexion is brought out again and again in official documents and the attitude of the Administration has throughout been hostile. We read, for example, in the records of the Shilluk Chiefs' Council that 'The *reth* is opposed to them all as a subversive influence, but there are evidently some Chiefs who are afraid of them. Young *bany* who give trouble shall be punished and turned out.'[4] Again, in 1947:

> A *bany*, or war-lord in Shilluk, is a social institution which has been forbidden for six years in Shilluk country, and the bar is well known. . . . The *bany* . . . is essentially a leader of the youth of a section, i.e. the warrior class. It is said that in the old days, when there was little public security and each section had to look after itself, the *bany* was a useful functionary, and in so far as he co-ordinated the warriors of a section this was doubtless so. Now, any 'class consciousness' on the part of the warriors must have an aggressive tendency as it can

[1] Howell, op. cit., p. 57.
[2] Hofmayr, op. cit.
[3] Cf. the Dinka word *bany* or 'expert'—though among the Shilluk the term is restricted to the age-set leader, whose duties are primarily military. See also Howell, op. cit., p. 60.
[4] Records of Shilluk Chiefs' Council meeting 1934 (unpublished).

9:Howell E-5 (1937-1950) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Other examples are recorded in the Shilluk District records.[1] Another important factor is the nature of Shilluk territorial organization. Settlements can, in a sense, actively continue a feud only with their immediate neighbours on either side. Thus, if a man of settlement *A* (see fig.) kills a man of settlement *B*, this may be the beginning of a feud which, though sometimes dormant, frequently breaks out again, because both sides are easily mobilized against each other; also it may lead to serious clashes in which the casualties may be considerable. At the same time, the sanctions for peaceful composition are comparatively greater. A feud between settlement *A* and settlement *C*, and even more between settlements *D* and *C*, is less easily sustained, though the sanctions for peaceful composition are comparatively less effective owing to territorial distance. Moreover, owing to kinship links which stretch across the boundaries of the settlements, there may be a tendency for intervening settlements to oppose further strife, or sometimes, on the other hand, to take sides in the affray, in which case internal warfare on a much wider scale may result. Demographic factors are here important and more easily discernible owing to the peculiar nature of Shilluk country and the way in which it is segmented in a continuous line from north to south, the boundaries being more or less at right angles to the Nile.



This form of sustained blood-feud between settlements in Shilluk society[2] is characteristic and endemic, and there are many instances both during the régime of the present Government and also during the previous Turkish administration, of which no official records are extant, but concerning which references may be found in the literature of early European travellers. Other forms of internal strife are either on a greater scale—widespread clashes often connected with subversive movements against the ruling *reth*—or minor hostilities within a settlement which concern the component lineages; from the evidence available, these appear to have been less prolonged than feuds between settlements. The first type of hostilities cannot really be

[1] The authorities were much exercised over the problem of feuds and homicide—at any rate up to 1935—and the incidence of homicide was until then very high indeed.

[2] I do not here attempt to correlate the Shilluk 'settlement' with similar segments in Nuer and Dinka society. If one called the four main provinces 'primary segments', the divisions (*lak*) would be 'secondary segments' and settlements would be 'tertiary segments' as described among the Nuer. The use of similar terms, however, presupposes a similarity of structure which does not exist, for segmentation among the Nuer is based on the analogy of a lineage, but this is not so among the Shilluk. Furthermore, can the Shilluk 'nation' (sometimes called tribe) be compared directly to a Nuer 'tribe'? Similar difficulties arise when we attempt to compare political or social units among the Dinka, although

9:Howell E-5 (1937-1950) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

described as feuds, for they amount to civil war; the latter are usually so quickly composed that the feud is soon over. The ultimate aim of the first is successful deposition of the monarch by one side or his retention by the other, and there is evidence of a traditional, almost institutionalized, opposition between the north and south.[1] In the latter form of hostilities the desire for peaceful composition after an outbreak of violence or an act of homicide was presumably fostered by expediency, for within so compact and densely populated a territorial unit the continuance of a feud would be intolerable.[2] Local lineages within a settlement are sufficiently united by common interests in economic activities, by marital ties, and above all in common defence against aggression from other settlements, that these sanctions were, and indeed still are, particularly effective. These distinctions are important, for not only are feuds between adjacent settlements often fiercely sustained, as we have seen, but it is at this level of internal disruption that the intervention of the *reth* is most obvious, if we are to accept the evidence of recorded instances. This is true whether we take the view that in the past, before Government influences were effective, the king's intervention took the form of arbitration demanded by the participants, or whether we take the opposite view that he took repressive or even legal action as the head of an organized State.

In the case of civil war over the tenure of the monarchy itself, the *reth* was the leading participant defending his personal position against a rival. Action against him was *ultra vires*, though this was no longer true as soon as his rival was established on the throne. In the case of hostilities within a settlement, the sanctions were probably sufficiently forceful to secure amicable composition without either external arbitration or repression. We must, therefore, consider homicide in the context of inter-settlement feuds in which, as we shall see, the *reth* was more particularly involved in the rôle of peacemaker. It will then be necessary to consider the more individual aspects of the laws of homicide.

The Reth's *Rôle in the Composition of Inter-settlement Feuds*

On this subject the Seligmans say:

> As the fountain of justice, the king kept for himself by far the greater part of the fines for homicide and other grave offences. The fine for man-killing was usually ten head of cattle, but sometimes more was levied; a girl might be taken in lieu of the cattle, when the king would allow the girl to marry, but would keep the bridewealth; or a girl and a boy might be kept as hostages by the king until the cattle were paid. The king might give one head of cattle to the family of the deceased as compensation; this, however, did not always settle the matter, and a blood feud might start and be continued until the balance of dead was even, often not only families but whole villages becoming involved.[3]

the Ngork Dinka at any rate are in this respect closer to the Shilluk than to the Nuer.

[1] See Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., p. 29.

[2] Latent hostility between kinship groups *within* a settlement sometimes prevailed. I recently drove with the *jago* of Ogod *Par* from his home in the extreme south of that settlement to his northern boundaries. He insisted that I should drive him back, presumably because he preferred the comfort of a motor-car to his own feet, but he gave as a reason that his people were at feud with the *kwa* Oman lineage lying just to the north of his own village (an act of homicide had occurred two years before). It may be noted, however, that the villages of these *kwa* Oman are set in Ogod *Bata* which is, in a sense, a separate settlement territorially but not politically within the boundaries of Ogod *Par*. It is doubtful whether a feud between these people would be long sustained.

[3] *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, p. 46. The authors make no reference to the evidence from which these deductions were made. It must be remembered that Seligman supported the view that the king had absolute power. 'In the old days his word was law....' *The Cult of Nyakang and the Divine Kings of the Shilluk*, Welcome Report, 1911.

15: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1926 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

will get her a calf-skin. The mother of the girl is supposed to tie the calf-skin the first time the girl wears it to a dance. If her mother is dead, then a woman the same age as her mother ties it for her.

Some Begging Customs of the Women.

The Shilluk women seem to derive much pleasure from begging for cattle from some of the richer men of the tribe. The occasion is made a holiday for the women of the village, and they go forth in their finest clothes. If the recipient of their honour lives at some distance, the start is made early in the morning, and all the women of the village go. If there are too many women in the village, then the women of a certain age go. The women of two different villages will not unite to go on these expeditions. The proper season for these begging dances is just before the rains begin, though they may be held any time during the dry season.

The women decide upon the man to be honoured by their party before they start. Occasionally, they honour a man from their own village, but in that case they only ask for a sheep. Often they go five or six miles, and sometimes they go as far as fifteen or twenty miles. While they are gone the men must stay at home to care for the babies. Often, on such occasions, a mother will leave a tiny baby at home for the whole day. Usually, they object to leaving their babies at home, but for this event it is different.

The man to be honoured is not warned, lest he hide from them. Should the man they are seeking be absent from the village, the women hang a string of beads made from the shell of the ostrich egg (rek) in the enclosure between his two houses. When he returns, he says, "Who brought this rek?" His wife replies, "The women brought it." He asks, "What do they want?" His wife replies, "An ox." His wife says "They will return." He says, "They will find nothing." His wife replies, "So many should have something, I have children, so many women should not be refused by red lips." When the women return they usually get the ox.

Before the women start on such a trip they choose a leader, unless they already have one. She is called a baña. She has the powers of a magistrate. If any trouble occurs among the women, she acts as judge. She is crowned with the rek, as the chief of the village is crowned. In

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

CHAPTER II.
SOCIAL STRUCTURE.

INTRODUCTION.

361 [101] [221] [883] Unlike their neighbours the Dinka and the Nuer the Shilluk have become entirely sedentary. They have a long river frontage in proportion to the population and there is therefore no necessity for an annual migration for summer grazing. In the summer the cattle are taken across to islands and the youths accompanying them build temporary cattle camps, but in no case is a village periodically entirely deserted.

[101] 614 631 Thus the Shilluk lack what for example the Dunjol Dinka living opposite them receive, namely an annual refresher course in clan organisation. The Dunjol Dinka village organisation disintegrates in the summer and the clans to a large extent reform for summer grazing. No such periodical reformation takes place with the Shilluk and consequently the clan organisation is more masked by the growth of territorial administrative units. Had the territorial unit, superimposed by years of the sedentary habit, obliterated completely the clan-organisation the administration of the tribe would be relatively simple. But Shilluk conservatism causes them to remain profoundly clan-conscious, and if to-day after some four hundred years of the sedentary state the tribe were for some reason to revert to nomadic habits there is no doubt that the clans would instantly reform.

621 182 721 The territorial system has evolved as the result of the grouping together of neighbouring hamlets, largely for purposes of defence against other groups, into what will be termed "settlements."

THE CLAN (KWAR).

614 *Kwar* (meaning literally "descendants"), followed by the name of the ancestor in question, is the Shilluk equivalent of clan. *Kwar* Okel designates all patrilineal descendants of Okel. Often the ancestor is mythical. There may be some hundred recognised clans in the tribe. But though every one knows to which clan he belongs, and although the clan entire continues to be an exogamous unit, it has ceased to possess for practical purposes any corporate unity. It

possesses no chief as such. The clans have in fact disintegrated over the face of the country, so that not only will clan "A" be distributed over several settlements, but one settlement will contain detachments of several clans. A detachment of clan within a settlement has been termed a "lineage" by Mr. Howell and will be so termed in this note.

THE SETTLEMENT (POOH).

The word *podh* is as elastic as the English "home" or the Arabic "dar." It can describe the entire Shilluk country, a settlement or a group of settlements. Properly however it designates the settlement, which is a group of villages, containing several lineages, agglomerated for purposes of mutual defence and owing allegiance to a common chief. The settlement is the basic element in the indigenous tribal structure.

The country is divided into some hundred settlements, varying in size from Kodok which contains more than 600 adult males to others containing less than 100. Geographically they are divided by lines approximately at right angles to the river.

Each settlement contains, in microcosm, the administrative difficulties of the tribe. For the settlement, which appears at first to be a purely territorial unit, is really a collection of different lineages. These lineages, welded together by threat of war, are apt to be dissident in the present time of comparative peace and although they owe allegiance to their common chief they sometimes feel and pay more to the lineage head within the settlement. There is, in fact, in the settlement, as in the whole tribe, a conflict between the loyalties due to the territorial unit and those due to the submerged but ever existing clan.

It is said that Nyikang originally granted each settlement to a clan. The descendants of the original grantees, if they survive, are considered the owners of the soil and are termed *dyil*, to distinguish them from subsequently immigrating lineages, described as *wedh*. Naturally the lineage of the original grantees is often extinct, in which case the next senior lineage in the settlement becomes *dyil*. In theory the *dyil*

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

554 lineage should provide the chief. Expediency, however, requires
613 that the chieftainship shall follow local strength, or in other words
621 local numerical superiority. Thus, with a certain inevitable lag,
622 the lineage which is most numerous within the settlement tends to dispossess the *dyil* lineage of the chieftainship[10] of the settlement. Nevertheless the *dyil* lineage, even when dispossessed of the chieftainship, retains a certain local prestige as owners of the soil and its opinion always carries extra weight in debate. Some settlements have an interesting arrangement whereby the chieftainship goes to two or three lineages in turn (*e.g.*, Odong Fanyikang).

361 Within the settlement each lineage has its original hamlet (*pan*
613 *dwong*)[11] subservient to which are the subsequently formed hamlets
621 of that lineage within the settlement. The chief of the *pan dwong* (*i.e.*, the lineage head within the settlement) represents his lineage in the politics and administration of the settlement. The hamlets of one lineage are not necessarily grouped together in the settlement.

613 With a strong settlement chief the lineage loyalties are largely
621 submerged in the *esprit de corps* of the settlement. Conversely when
622 the chief is personally weak or belongs to a lineage which is numerically small the latent lineage loyalty raises its head and the administration of the settlement suffers accordingly.

The Hamlet and the Homestead.

[613 Unlike the settlement each hamlet (*pac*) is a homogeneous unit
621] in the sense that a hamlet contains only people of the same lineage. Some hamlets are very small, consisting of a single homestead, while others may contain fifty. In any case the hamlet is no more than an enlarged family group. The homesteads are arranged in roughly

10. The *lau* (meaning sheepskin) is the insignia of chieftaincy. The name has been transferred to the strip of cloth which each chief receives, usually from the *Reth*, on his appointment.

11. *Pac* = hamlet. This word assumes the forms:
pan when followed by a qualifying adjective.
pa when followed by a genitive.
Its plural is *myar*.

The homesteads are arranged in roughly horse-shoe shape around an open space in which are tethered the sheep and cattle of the hamlet. Within this space is usually a very large hut (*luak*) used for animals in the rains and throughout the year as a guest-house and general village club. There is also usually a normal sized hut, with no surrounding fence, known as the *geu*, which is used as a dormitory by the unmarried men. In this hut are put the ashes of the cattle dung with which the young men cover themselves at night for warmth and protection from flies. Some villages have a tree in the central circle, but more often there is a complete and inhospitable absence of shade.

The homestead (*gol*) consists of two huts between which is an area enclosed by a fence of dura stalks or rough grass matting. The family group inhabiting the homestead is called also (presumably by transference) *gol*, and it is in this latter sense that the word *gol* will be used in this note.

In this sense *gol* is the smallest (though important) social unit in the tribe. An unmarried man does not own a homestead. All unmarried persons live in the homestead and adhere to the *gol* of their father. If their father is dead they adhere to the *gol* of their eldest married brother or, if they have none, to their deceased father's (married) brother. The owner of the homestead to which they adhere is the leader of their *gol*, and as such is responsible for the behaviour of its members. This vicarious responsibility on the part of the *gol* leader is a corollary to the principles of the ownership of cattle (and sheep). The cattle of the *gol* are owned and disposed of by the *gol* leader alone, and since the remedy for a wrong is a payment of cattle it follows that he and not the actual malefactor is held responsible. The position resembles that of the Roman family where the pater-familias alone is *sui juris*, all others being *alieni juris*. The Shilluk *filius familias*, however, becomes *sui-juris* on marriage which the Roman son did not. The vicarious responsibility of the *gol* leader has the convenient aspect that the *gol* leader is more easily found by the arm of the law than the actual malefactor because of the fact that he owns a homestead.

With the exception of *Reth*, these titles must always be prefixed to the name of the person addressed. Alternatively the title alone may be used.

The *Kwar Reth* is vastly bigger than any other clan. The reasons for its abnormal growth are two, namely their comparatively great wealth with the consequent tendency to marry more wives, and the cunning process of dissemination whereby the *Kwar Reth* have been gradually planted out and have taken root in every part of the Shilluk kingdom. It is this latter process which will now be described.

The *Reth* has many wives,[13] most of whom live with him at Fashoda. When one is about to give birth she goes to her own village where the *Nyireth*[14] is born. As soon as he is weaned he is "planted out"[15] into the charge of some reputable *Collo* chief[16] who becomes responsible for his upbringing. In the hamlet of his adoption the *Nyireth* grows up and while small herds the sheep and cattle and plays with the village boys as an equal. When he reaches the age of marriage he builds a separate village nearby which will be known as *Pa Nyireth* and will be the village of the *Nyireth's* descendants. As the descendants of the *Nyireth* increase this original *Pa Nyireth* will put forth offshoot villages in the immediate neighbourhood, and thus we see the process whereby the *Kwar Reth* is planted out takes root and grows in an area owned by a *Collo* lineage. It is by this continually repeated process that the *Kwar Reth* have been and continue to be disseminated throughout the country. Each branch of the *Kwar Reth*, once planted, grows alongside the local *Collo* lineage and tends to eclipse it. Rivalry results, and often the *Kwar Reth* attain to such numerical superiority that they oust the *Collo* lineage from the chieftainship, whereupon the latter either move elsewhere

13. The wife of a *Reth* is known as *bareth*.

14. It is here assumed that the child is male, though *nyireth* covers either sex. If female she will be similarly planted out but of course she will found no lineage.

15. *pidh* (used also for planting out cuttings in a flower bed).

16. The chief entrusted will often be the *bareth's* brother. In any case he cannot refuse this trust which will bring him certain temporary benefits such as milk cows for the *Nyireth's* nurture but which will probably result eventually in his descendants being made subservient to the lineage of the *Nyireth*.

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

or survive as a subject element in what was originally their own area. Queen Abudok[17] is said to have prophesied that one day the *Kwar Reth* would eat up the *Collo*. This process can certainly be seen occurring in some localities. For example in the areas of Detwok and Atoadwoi the *Kwar Reth* are already probably more numerous than the *Collo*. The process, however, is probably not conscious and there is no marked *esprit de corps* between different branches of the *Kwar Reth*. There are great areas which contain no *Kwar Reth* and others[18] where the *Kwar Reth*, though present, remain subject to the indigenous *Collo* lineage. Though there is everywhere local rivalry the grave view taken by Queen Abudok is probably unjustified.

The other reason for the inordinate growth of the *Kwar Reth* is their great wealth. Until the Turkish Government began its not very successful attempts at governing the Shilluk with the assistance of their *Reths* the latter were extremely rich in cattle. They acquired these largely in the following way. Whenever one settlement waged unjustified war upon another or refused repeatedly to obey his order, the *Reth* would raise as a "royal levy"[19] the adjacent settlements, who would go and drive off the malefactors' cattle and burn their villages. The strength of the levy would vary with the readily calculable strength of the opposition but a good margin of safety would be allowed to ensure that the levy would win. It is said that such levies were in fact seldom resisted, the victims being glad to save their skins at the cost of most of their cattle. The participators in the levy got a percentage of the cattle taken but the majority went to the *Reth*.

THE ORORO.

Ororo is a term used to describe any lineage of the *Kwar Reth* which has been degraded, by act of the *Reth*, to *Collo* rank. Such are described by the Shilluk as being "*Kwar Reth* really, but like *Collo*." Numerically they are inconsiderable, but their origin and status are of

17. A *Nyireth* who ruled the Shilluk country from Dettim in about 1650.

18. *e.g.*, Awarajuok.

19. *Tish mi Reth*.

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

622 and in others from the Settlement Chief. In a few cases this *lau* (sometimes designated as *lau thin*, (minor *lau*,) to distinguish it from the *lau* of the Settlement Chief) is given neither by the *Reth* nor by the Settlement Chief but by the chief of the settlement from which this lineage migrated into their present locality. This is uncommon.

613 The headman of a principle village represents his lineage within the settlement. To a certain extent he is and should be made responsible for 622 the taxes of his lineage. If he is the representative of the *dyil* lineage he [651] will have a special status as representative of the true owners of the soil, and in this case the Settlement Chief will tend to regard him with some apprehension as the leader of a potentially rival faction.

622 The headman of a subsidiary village has a lowly status. He has no *lau* and is no more than the head of a family group. Many villages, especially in Luak, are very small, consisting perhaps of a single homestead so that a headman may be the only taxpayer in his village. [621] The forming of such separate homesteads is contrary to good order and should be discouraged as far as possible. In Delal and Atodwoi Divisions the villages are on the whole very much bigger and the tribal discipline tends consequently to be better.

THE GOL LEADER.

592 Every married man has a homestead although it may comprise only himself and his wife. As the owner of a homestead he is a *gol* leader. As such he has little official status but, as has already been explained, he is entirely responsible for the unmarried members of his *gol* and should collect their taxes and hand them to the headman.

To recapitulate we may tabulate the political ladder as follows:—

681

Shilluk tribe	.. ..	*Reth.*
Luak and Ger	.. ..	Chiefs of *Gol Nyikang* and *Gol Dhiang*.
Division (*luak*)	.. ..	Division (or Court) Chief.
Settlement (*podh*)	..	Settlement Chief.
Hamlet (*pac*)	.. ..	*Jal dwong pac.*
Gol	.. .. ..	*Jal Gol.*

613 The Shilluk, although he is conscious of his relationship to his widely scattered kinsmen, normally thinks in terms of his localised lineage. Thus in using the word *Kwar* he often refers to some comparatively recent ancestor, probably to the Shilluk who originally migrated to his settlement and founded his particular lineage. The emphasis here is upon the circumstances in which he is questioned. 613 Away from his settlement and speaking in tribal terms he will refer 614 to the ancestor common to all his kinsmen, in more detailed family discussions to the founder of his lineage.

Every Shilluk is thus a member of a large and scattered kinship group. He is also a member of a local lineage and is bound to it by vigorous feelings of unity fostered by proximity and common interests. In contrast he is also the inhabitant of a settlement (*Podh*) and common 621 residence within it implies something more than a neighbourly spirit. Its occupants are not a mere collection of independent lineages, for they are united by social, economic and political obligations, by the need for mutual protection and have recognised rules of behaviour to one another.

361 The Shilluk are now a sedentary tribe, though they were originally 484 nomads, and it has been said that their apparent political and social [182] cohesion in contrast to many related peoples, has been partly due to the greater facility of communication. In fact their history has [678] been one of frequent internal strife and dynastic quarrels, but it is true to say that in the rainy season, when normal communications are made difficult by the rising of the river level, they have always had an unrestricted medium of travel on the Nile itself and settlements are conveniently situated near to its banks. Shilluk villages are built in an almost continuous line along the west bank with a few scattered settlements on the east bank and on the lower reaches of the Sobat. This formation, however, means that they are dispersed over a very long area, and from Fashoda in the centre, it is a considerable journey to Tonga or Muomo. Taking Shilluk country as a long narrow strip, without including the inland pastures or hunting grounds, the density of population is undoubtedly far greater than among most Nilotic tribes in the Sudan, but the length of country between the centre and

the more distant settlements, owing to the length of the populated area, is not very much shorter. Most parts of Shilluk country are accessible to the inhabitants even when the water-courses and swamps are full, but travelling is not easy and social contact consequently less frequent in the rainy season. The result of such periodic inconvenience of communication and the length of inhabited country are twofold. In the first place, in the past at anyrate, the immediate power of the central authority the *Reth*, was slightly diminished and he was more dependent on the loyalty and competence of the settlement chiefs. Second, difficulty of communication increases the isolation of the settlement and intensifies the feeling of unity within it. Moreover, the clan, having no territorial basis, is put to a further disadvantage. The settlement thus gains importance socially, economically and politically in the structure of the tribe.

The formation of the settlement is based on a particular association of lineages and its structure can only be understood after a searching examination of their position. The fission of clan segments, individual enterprise and migration has been frequent for a very long period of Shilluk history. In each settlement there are therefore both indigenous elements and newcomers. Mr. Pumphrey has explained in outline the position and significance of the *Dyil*.[1] They are fundamentally associated with the land they occupy, and theoretically they enjoy great prestige and authority. Among most primitive peoples the fixation of sentiment on land is bound up with human interests and those who are more closely bound to it acquire special functions and prerogatives not accorded to newcomers. Besides their ritual association with the land, the *Dyil* have obligations and observances of primary importance in the social machinery of their settlement and they form the centre round which internal political activities revolve. Subsequent accretions known in Shilluk as *Wedh* normally hold a position of political subservience to the *Dyil*. It must be emphasised here, that this implies no social inferiority; it merely means that the *Dyil* are expected to take the lead in matters of importance to all inhabitants of the settlement. The *Jago* is usually the chosen representative of the *Dyil* lineage and holds the *Law Dwong* of office Mr. Pumphrey has pointed out that

[1] Dyil are the descendants of the people who originally received grants of land from Nyikang. - Analyst]

18: Howell E-5 (1937) 1941 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

554 613 621 this is not always true in practice, for the *Dyil* authority is frequently usurped by a later but more numerous element, sometimes by a lineage of the *Kwar Reth*. Even when this has occurred, the *Dyil* retain some of their rights and their especial relation to the land is not forgotten. They appear to have prior right to speak at a meeting of the local court; "let the *Dyil* speak" is a common saying at a legal discussion. However, newcomers who have taken over the position of authority seek to establish a ritual and traditional background for the power and prestige they have acquired and it is a tendency among the Shilluk for these newcomers to claim and assume the title of *Dyil* even if they are not. For example, in the settlement of *Yom Dhok-Alal* which is described in more detail below, the *Kwar Nyimol* have assumed the *Lau Dwong* though they have no traditional right to it, and they claim rather unconvincingly that they are the *Dyil*. Actually there are many lineages who have been in occupation of the settlement for a much longer period. *Kwar Oring* is said to be the oldest and is now represented by a single old man who is blind and near the end of his life. He lives with his married daughter at *Adod*, the smallest and most insignificant of hamlets. Even *Kwar Oring* is not descended from the original and autochthonous element, for there were older lineages who have died out or migrated in a body to other parts of the country. This will be the fate of *Kwar Oring* after the death of the sole representative. Although recognised as the oldest resident lineage in *Yom Dhok Alal*, there is no evidence that they ever held both the title of *Dyil* and authority over the other lineages.

621 622 613 182 554 The dominant lineage which gains undisputed authority through long association with the territory, or acquires the position through numerical superiority, is thus collectively the nucleus of the settlement round which other lineages group themselves. The *Jago*, their chosen leader, is the most important, though not necessarily the eldest, representative of that lineage and he is also the chief of the settlement. He is indeed in the nature of a common bond between the inhabitants, for through him social and political equilibrium is maintained. It follows that the occupants of a settlement are bound together, not only by proximity and common interests, but by an attitude of obedience to the

18: Howell E-5 (1937) 1941 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

chief and by their special relations with the lineage which holds authority over them. Thus there are social, political and economic influences backed by common residence which promote unity and emotional security, and patterns of behaviour arise entirely distinct from those which characterise the kinship group.

The balance of loyalty to settlement or to kin is difficult to define. The lineage resident in one locality is clearly the most significant unit of society. Blood relationship is closer and co-operation is intensified by daily contact and mutual interests. All the factors which make for peace and mutual help in the settlement are not sufficient to break the ties which unite the local lineage. Loyalty, obligations and observances are greater towards a blood relative who is also a neighbour than towards an individual who is a neighbour only. The corporate unity of the lineage is kept alive by kinship which is a biological fact and the observance of exogamy and all the complicated obligations raised in marriage do not allow the Shilluk to forget. The extended clan, however, in which relationship may be so remote as to be fictitious, is not cemented together by lasting and mutual interests, nor are old associations renewed by periodic reunion. Even so, the traditions of the clan are to some extent maintained and the rule of exogamy is not broken however scattered its members

The Shilluk settlement consists of a number of hamlets *Myer*, (*Pl of Pac*,) each occupied by a lineage. The settlement has a varying number of distinct lineages resident therein, but each hamlet is exclusively occupied by a kinship group. Each hamlet is a separate cluster of huts which are built along the high ground parallel to the river bank. The distance between each varies from a hundred yards to a mile or so. The hamlet is not constant in the number of its huts and grows or diminishes in size according to the increase or decrease in numbers of the lineage which occupies it. Mr. Pumphrey has explained that off-shoots from hamlets are continually being initiated by enterprising young Shilluk who, having married, wish to build a home for themselves away from the parent hamlet. Sometimes these off-shoots (*Nyole Myer*) are started in other parts of the country, more usually within the settlement and not far from the birth-place fo their founder.

A new hamlet thus founded may remain a single homestead of no great importance in the life of the lineage and none at all in the structure of the settlement. On the other hand the young man who thus breaks away from the hamlet of his birth and up-bringing may prosper and acquire many wives. In this case the off-shoot will develop with rapidity and after three generations may be as large as the parent village. Other kinsmen may join and swell the number of homesteads.

The Shilluk word for hamlet is *Pac* and has two meanings: truly a *Pac* is a hamlet founded by the original immigrant to the settlement where it is situated. Subsequent offshoots are, however, technically included under the name of the central hamlet from which they spring. *Pa Kwar Ajang* may thus refer to the original hamlet founded by *Ajang*. After a few generations the number of associated hamlets and the number of *Nyole Myer* may be considerable, and *Pa Kwar Ajang* may be used to designate them collectively. Under normal conditions, probably after three generations, but depending entirely on the increase of progeny, and the number of homesteads built by descendants, the offshoot will acquire a separate name and in every day conversation will not be included under the title of the original hamlet. Hamlet names among the Shilluk may or may not have the prefix *Pac* or *Pa*.[1] *Pa Kwar Ding* means the hamlet of *Ding's* descendants. Others have no prefix and the etymological explanation is often hard to find. Some at least have purely descriptive names. Thus *Pan Thin* means the little hamlet and *Panowak* refers to a hamlet situated near the bush. In the settlement of *Yom Dhok Alal*, those hamlets recently built on the north side of the water-course retain the same name as their parent hamlets and indeed are not distinguished from them. Their inhabitants have not gained sufficient numbers or prestige to be regarded as a distinct section of their lineage.

A more detailed examination and analysis of the structure and development of a Shilluk settlement necessitates the use of an example.

1. The letters P and F are interchangeable in Shilluk. Thus *Pacodo* = *Facodo* (*Fachodo*).

18: Howell E-5 (1937) 1941 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

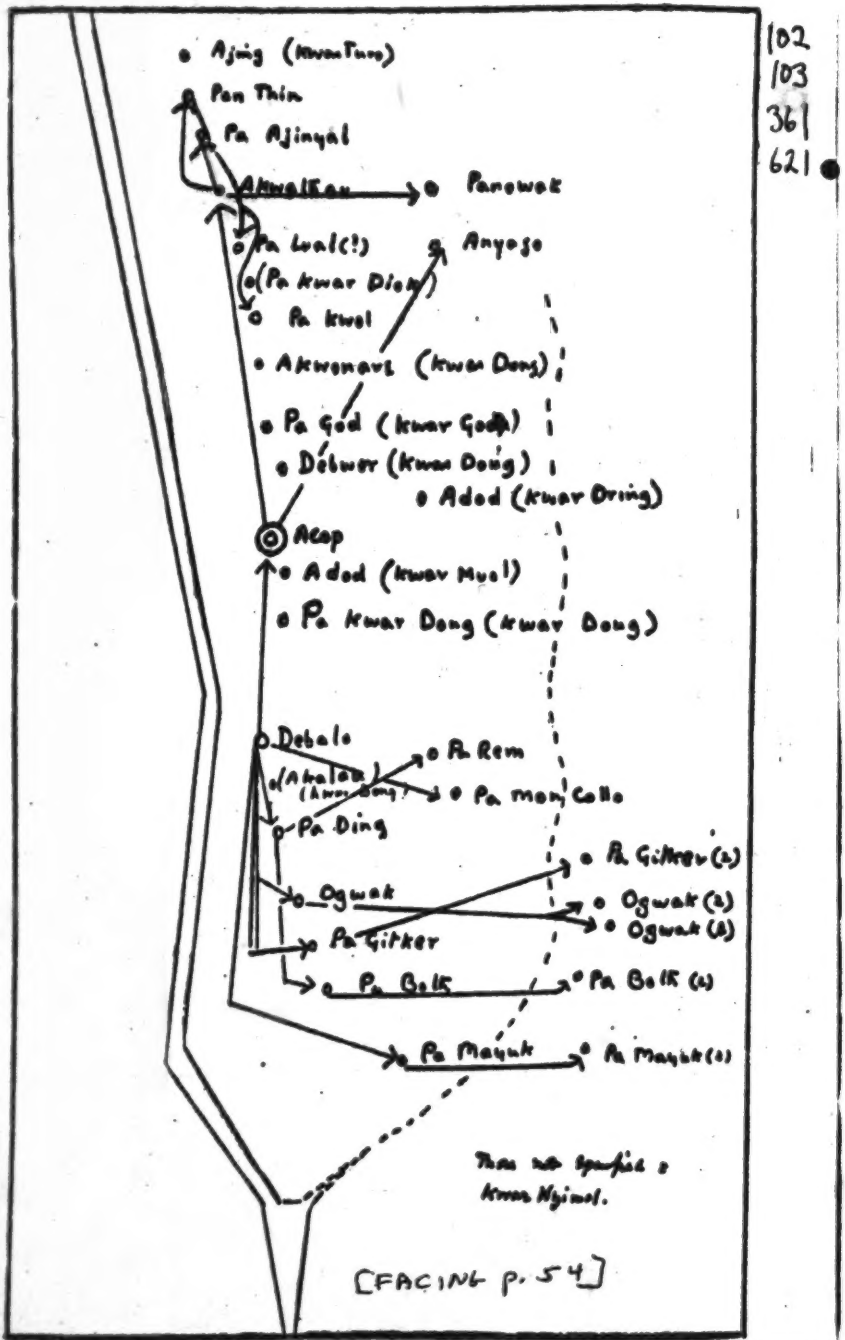
For this purpose *Podh Yom Dhok- Alal* has been chosen and in particular *Kwar Nyimol* which is the dominant clan lineage within it. *Yom* is very vaguely differentiated from *Dhok- Alal*, but the distinction is not a real one and the two are considered as one settlement. It seems that the *Kwar Nyimol* originally settled in the latter area and gradually spread to *Yom*. It is possible that in the past the two territories were entirely unconnected, but that the members of *Kwar Nyimol* increased rapidly, dominated the other lineages living there and extended their sphere of influence in such a way as to incorporate *Yom*. If this is so it provides an excellent illustration of the way in which the structure and boundaries of a settlement may change with the development and movements of the occupants.

In the map of the settlement it will be seen that there are twenty, five hamlets, not including the off shoots who have no separate names- of which sixteen are occupied by members of *Kwar Nyimol*, four by *Kwar Dong*, one by *Kwar Muol*, one by *Kwar Oring* (almost extinct), one by *Kwar Turo*, and one by *Kwar Godh*. It is clear that *Kwar Nyimol* are the most important and hold their position by numerical superiority if by nothing else. *Kwar Dong* are the next largest in numbers of hamlets, while the others have but one hamlet each. It might be supposed that since *Kwar Nyimol* is numerically by far the largest lineage, it is also the oldest in the settlement. There is, however, conclusive evidence that most of the other lineages occupied the area long before the arrival of *Pyem* who founded *Debolo*, the original hamlet of *Kwar Nyimol*. Most of the other lineages have priority of claim to the title *Dyil*. Disease, war, fission and migration have caused a decrease in their numbers over a long period.

Kwar Nyimol are *Ororo*,[2] but since there does not seem to be any exception in their case, the example illustrates both the pattern of segmentation with a settlement of the various lineages of a clan and the growth of a *Wedh* lineage which has outnumbered the *Dyil* and assumed the *Lau Dwong*. The exactitude of the genealogical list shown on page 67 cannot be vouched for. It is as the *Kwar Nyimol*

2. The special status of the *Ororo* is explained by Mr. Pumphrey (page 12).

[see MPumphrey, His File. -Analyst]



102
103
361
621

[FACING p. 54]

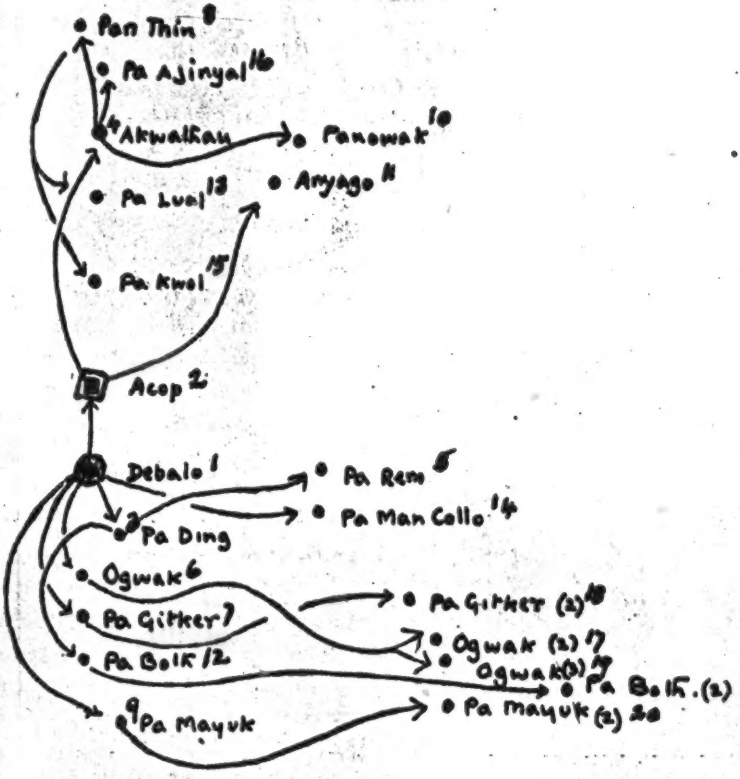
recite it, but in any case it is given as an illustration of the process of fission and the development of offshoots typical to any Shilluk clan lineage and might well be done in figures only. *Debalo*, founded by *Pyem* who was reduced to the status of *Ororo* from the *Kwar Reth*, was the first hamlet to be founded. *Pyem* had three grandsons, one of whom, *Odhek*, migrated to a spot a few hundred yards away, in the direction of *Tonga*, and there founded *Acop*. *Acop* is now the central and most important hamlet in the settlement and is the home of *Jago Ameilek*[3] who holds the *Lau Dwong* of the settlement and indeed the whole of *Tonga*.

There is no apparent reason why *Debalo* should cease to be the most important village, but the leadership of the *Kwar Nyimol* has for some time been in that branch of the lineage who occupy *Acop*. The *Lau Dwong* is not necessarily inherited by an eldest son, or by a son resident in his father's hamlet. There are no rules of primogeniture and the choice was made with the approval of all members of the lineage. Even other lineages have some say in the matter and the appointment must be confirmed by the *Reth*. Accession to the title of *Jago* is thus controlled by the personality, prestige and competence of the claimant. *Acop* has been the seat of the *Jago* at least for the last three generations. *Debalo* and *Acop* are the parent hamlets of two separate lines of segmentation. From *Debalo* sprang all the hamlets situated to the east, while from *Acop*, which was itself founded from *Debalo*, sprang the hamlets in *Yom* stretching towards *Tonga*. The process of fission which can be traced on the genealogical chart is substantiated by many members of *Kwar Nyimol*.

The smaller hamlets which lie beyond the water-course behind *Dhok Alal*, provide more recent examples of this breaking away of individuals and the foundation of new hamlets. They have not yet grown large enough to acquire a separate entity and they are still considered part of their parent hamlets. *Pa Gither* remains one homestead only, while its extension though more recent is larger. *Pa Gither* sprang from *Debalo*. In the case of *Pa Mayuk*, *Okwano* the son fo

3. *Jago Ameilek* is now dead.

102
103
361
621



[FACING p. 55]

18: Howell E-5 (1937) 1941 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Amayku's nephews founded a hamlet across the water-course but is now dead and left no sons. In this example the offshoot has come to nothing. *Pa Ding* also, from which sprang *Pa Rem* and *Pa Both* and which is of long standing, is now disintegrating. Its occupants have not been prolific and there have been too many offshoots for it to remain undiminished. It is now occupied by one man only. *Ogwak* on the other hand is flourishing and has two well-established offshoots. Thus hamlets are founded and in some cases prosper and the inhabitants increase in number. The founder is often joined by a brother or colateral relative and later the occupants may not be the direct descendants of the founder[4]. In other instances those long-established disintegrate and are sometimes abandoned altogether. The settlement is never a static formation but a dynamic and changing association of lineages, who split up among themselves within the boundaries or send out offshoots to settle in other parts of the country. Latterly, however, there has been a tendency towards stabilization. In the past, the settlement was only a loose alliance of local branches of the clan, similar in construction and significance to the larger divisions of the tribe. However, the limited size of the area and constant contact have produced an integral unit of the social body bound by something more than a vague tradition of military co-operation. The inhabitants of a settlement live in close proximity, gave legal and economic interests in common and look to their chief to represent their collective grievances in the affairs of the tribe. A mutual protection pact is, however, the basis on which they are grouped together and in this connection it is necessary to give some account of the age-sets into which they are organized.

4. In *Dhok Alal* it is interesting to note that in at least three cases hamlets have been founded by the husbands of female members of the lineage. Thus *Pa Mau Collo* was started by the husband of the daughter of *Adultung*. The daughter of *Kukwei* married into some other clan and left the territory, but her son returned to found *Pa Lual*. The daughter of *Gither* married a man from *Ayigo* and together they settled in *Dhok Alal* and their hamlet is considered an extension of *Pa Gither*. In a few cases the Shilluk settle matrilocally as in the case of *Adultung's* grandson. Often the descendants of a man who has settled in his wife's home seem to trace descent matrilineally, and will often mention the name of their mother's father, if asked their lineage, rather than a forbear in the paternal line. This is a legal fiction of convenient usage and is not technically recognised. The test of exogamy does not apply for a man would not seek to marry into his mother's lineage, but it is a claim which provides protection and added prestige to the individual who lives in close proximity to his mother's kinsmen.

18: Howell E-5 (1937) 1941 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

THE AGE-SET SYSTEM.

561 The age-grade[5] organisation is a system of compulsory associations based on classifications of age and sex. In structure it is usually tribal, in outlook and political function essentially democratic. Among the [621] Shilluk, however, age-sets are recruited within the local group or settlement and have no connection beyond similarity of form and function, with age-sets recruited in other settlements. As will be seen, the role which the organization plays in tribal and settlement life is very limited, and is confined to specific military purposes.

It has been stated by some authorities that the age-set system is entirely lacking among the Shilluk or that it has broken down beyond recognition.[6] This would not be surprising, for the organisation of a 182 group into parallel associations based on age and sex, for political 561 purposes at any rate, is almost incompatible with an autocratic political 693 system. It must be remembered that although the concept of monarchy [170] among the Shilluk has not reached the same level as in the Lakustrine Bantu kingdoms or certain other Bantu tribes, it is more developed 182 than among most kindred Nilotics. The age-set system necessarily cuts 561 across the bonds of consanguinity, and, without severe modifications of 614

---

5. See distinction between "age-set" and "age-grade" as followed by Prof. Radcliffe-Brown and quoted by E. E. Evans-Pritchard in *The Nuer: Age-sets*—Sudan Notes and Records Vol. xix pp. 233-234. Doctor Evans-Pritchard also refers to "Age-set" system rather than "Age-grade" system and since this is a more accurate description his terminology is followed below.

6. Hofmayer (Wilhelm Hofmayer "*Die Shilluk. Geschichte, Religion und Leben Ein Nilotes-stammes.*" 1925) does not mention age-grades specifically, but with reference to initiation and warfare he mentions the existence of such an organization.

> "Every man is a soldier and literally always under arms. Every Shilluk who has ceremonially danced is a warrior as long as he is able to bear arms. They form groups. Every settlement is independent with its own *Bany* (principle singer and president). Different settlements combine and sally forth under the leadership of the eldest *Bany* against their powerful enemies. The *Bany* has only advisory powers and is chosen by the chiefs of the district. Unmarried youths form what corresponds to our permanent army, which is divided according to age and has many names."

18:Howell E-5 (1937) 1941 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

social and political function, cannot exist in a society where authority is held by virtue of blood. Further it is likely to raise ties and mutual obligations which conflict with those patterns of behaviour which unite the members of a clan. Usually, when the age-set system is highly developed, the clan system is weakened. The reverse may also be true, and since the kinship groups within the Shilluk settlement retain their distinction, the age-set system is of no great social significance. This is particularly so with regard to political matters. The *Jago*[7] and the elders of the *Dyil* clan and a limited number of representatives from the less powerful lineages hold political authority in the settlement, and over them is the theoretical omnipotence of the *Reth*.

The group solidarity of the settlement springs from the power and prerogative of the *Dyil* clan and from common interests and territorial proximity. The compulsory association and stratification of all male members of the settlement emphasises that feeling of solidarity, but does not conflict with the political function of the *Dyil* clan, for its purpose is limited to warfare. In inter-lineage disputes within the boundaries of the settlement the organization does not function, but in warfare on a wider scale when the separate lineages must fight as one, the young men and warriors are mobilized into age-sets.

Every male inhabitant of a settlement, on reaching the age of puberty, is automatically grouped with his coaevals and together they are recruited to the most recently formed age-set. Each age-set, known in Shilluk as *Ric*, is made up of a series of sub-divisions which are grouped together temporarily until a new reorganization is made. There are two grades through which the members of an age-set will pass before retiring from active military service. Recruitment is compulsory and never individual.

The general structure of the organization is best explained diagrammatically.

---

7. Chief.

476
to be their duty to aid him. The arrangement is merely reciprocal. 561
At the beer feast afterwards, however, the guests are arranged according 476
to their respective sub-divisions. The two senior sub-divisions present 561
enter the hut of their host before the others and it is their privilege 574
to taste the beer first and approve it. They remain in the hut for sometime for they have had an exhausting day in the fields and are thirsty. Outside the hut in the courtyard are grouped the lower sub-divisions, eagerly awaiting their share which is passed out to them when those inside are satisfied with the quality of the beer. Possibly another sub-division is then allowed to enter the hut if there is room at the back.

The sub-divisions are grouped inside the hut in ascending order of seniority and the leader of the senior sub-division present, (*Pagy*) sits near the door. The *Pagy* has a special gourd which is kept full [264] of beer by the man next him. Etiquette is rigidly observed and every-one is careful to sit in the right place and take his turn at the beer. [562] No women are present except the host's wife or wives who sit at the [533] back and serve the beer. Every age-set has its own song and this is sung by those inside the hut while the young men outside take up the chorus.

The existence within the settlement of organized age-sets limited 561
by territorial boundaries is a factor which should ensure co-ordination 571
and peace between the different lineages. The Shilluk say that age-578
mates will not fight each other. In fact this is an exaggeration for the sense of loyalty and mutual obligation between age-mates is not constant or strong. The reason for this is the rarity of occasions in which the age-set organization functions to-day and the very limited purpose to which it is put. In reality, mutual ties and observances practiced by age-mates are quite outside the deeper and more permanent ties of kinship and the Shilluk is not bothered by perpetually conflicting emotions. The age-sets do not operate as such until all lineages are bound together by a common cause apart from and in a different context to internal bickerings which are not infrequent.

Political authority is not now derived from the age-set system, 554
but from the powerful position in the settlement of the dominant lineage. 613
621

18: Howell E-5 (1937) 1941 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Leadership in war however, is, dependent upon the collective vote of the age-sets, and this perhaps provides a clue to the origin and former purpose of the settlement; namely the necessity of alliance under the threat of war. The local kinship group, split off from the main branch of the clan is not a sufficiently powerful body to defend itself against attack. So lineages, resident in the same part of the country, join together and possibly link themselves to some numerically superior group. Mutual protection is thus made possible. The strongest lineage of the group later assumes political authority and a chief is chosen from its members, but for the purpose which the alliance was originally made, the warriors range themselves in ranks where kinship counts for nothing. A war-leader is elected and not necessarily from the dominant lineage. This is not, of course, the origin of the age-set system, but it may account for the form it has taken among the Shilluk.[9] Latterly, when large-scale warfare is comparatively rare, the original purpose of the alliance is disappearing and with it the motive for the age-set system. A period of proximity, common political and economic interests, however, have caused the separate lineages to regard themselves united by social ties and patterns of behaviour more lasting than those raised by a temporary alliance. The settlement thus becomes an integral unit of the social body.

9. The larger territorial divisions of the tribe, the *Leak*, which are described in Mr. Pumphrey's article, originated in the same way as the settlements. The inhabitants of each division made a temporary pact when a common cause arose. It is therefore likely that age-sets in the past covered a larger section of the population than they do today when each age-set is confined to the inhabitants of one settlement. The Shilluk are reticent when questioned on the subject and further investigation is necessary before a full account of the age-set system among the Shilluk can be recorded.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

that Shilluk country once extended as far as Gordon's Tree which is just south of Khartoum. Whether there were Shilluk settlements permanently occupied in that area or whether this represents the furthest point to which they penetrated in raids and hunting parties is not certain.

The Shilluk are now a sedentary people and do not have any large scale migration in search of fresh pastures during the dry season. Their permanent villages, built on the high ground close to the Nile, are occupied all the year round, and only the youths go into the cattle camps, which are never more than a few miles from the villages. The cattle camps are mostly situated on islands and dried out watercourses which run parallel to the river.

Territorially the country is divided into two great provinces Gerr and Luak. (Note 1) These two provinces are again divided into further divisions, the functional meaning of which is difficult to discover, but which retain according to Shilluk tradition a vague feeling of mutual co-operation in times of stress. These divisions were made by order of Nyikang. In most cases these divisions have been utilized by the Government for administrative purposes. Finally the country is divided into a large number of settlements, which are made up of many villages. Shilluk clans are not territorial in basis for distinct lineages of one clan may live in many and widely separated settlements. The largest unit exclusively occupied by a kinship group is the village or *bac*.[2]

The Shilluk people are divided into four main classes or groups of clans.

(i) The Kwareth, the royal clan who trace descent from Nyikang and from whom the *reth*[3] is chosen.

(ii) The Ororo, a disinherited branch of the royal house, who do not differ from commoners except in the special functions

2. See P. P. Howell, "The Shilluk Settlement": *S.N.R.* XXIV, 1941.
3. The word *reth* has often been translated as "king." We prefer to use the Shilluk term throughout.

For Notes see pp. 73 ff.

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

312 Aguno I stopped to watch a couple of men stretching and
[281] scraping a cow hide. One of them called to a girl in the village, his wife or sister, to bring him some water to soften the skin. With great reluctance she brought a large bowlful and stood by, while with lavish hand the man splashed the precious water on skin and ground indiscriminately. He then demanded more and I thought, and hoped, that she would refuse; that she would remind him that she had walked eleven burning miles to bring the water that he threw away so thoughtlesly. After a moment's hesitation, however, she picked up the bowl he had thrown at her feet and turned slowly towards the hut, but as she did so I saw two tears overflow from her brimming eyes and roll down her cheeks. Such
[562] drudgery is forced on these womenfolk by circumstance and custom, and we can only wish that things were in some way bettered.

361 But now let us proceed and see what a Shilluk village is
[487] like. We enter it along a little path which leads from the main road and passes through the dried up, yellow stubble of last season's millet plantation.

Passing through the space between the fences of two
[367] neighbouring homesteads, we come upon a large level
[535] circle of bare ground which is the playground of the village and its dancing floor. Sometimes it boasts a tree, green and leafy in contrast to its dun, dusty surroundings, under the refreshing shade of which the village elders gather to discuss
[521] the affairs of their little world: the price of cattle, the failure of the harvest, the prospect of the fishing. Under the tree, too,
[534] or at the further side of the dancing floor, are two large forked stakes driven into the ground to hold the drums. Around this circular central space the family dwellings are grouped.

[621] Villages vary in size, from the small hamlet consisting of two or three homesteads to a large settlement of sixty or seventy. An average-sized village contains about thirty families. All, however, are set up on the same plan, and the houses are built according to the same pattern. Each house-
351 hold consists of two houses set facing one another in a small